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# The Central Falls Free Public Library

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5 Year Long Range Plan  
(July 1999-June2004)

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## **Profile**

Central Falls, "The smallest city in the smallest state", is home to Rhode Island's poorest population. Its' 1.2 square miles has become a densely populated urban center consisting largely of unskilled workers and immigrants living in low cost multifamily housing. According to the 1990 census, about 10% of the labor force in Central Falls are unemployed and over one fifth of the city's households are maintained on incomes that fall below poverty level. Due, for the most part, to this low tax base, property owners (consisting of about one fifth of the resident population) pay the states highest equalized tax rate. Another result of the low tax base was the state's intervention in the funding of the public school system. Lack of funds and poor budgeting by the school system brought the city to the brink of bankruptcy until, in 1994, the state took over. This was the first time in Rhode Island's history that a city failed to maintain its own schools. Since 1985, the school-aged population of the city has mushroomed with over 85 % of those children attending public schools. The city, consequentially, has had difficulty facilitating these students. While state funds have greatly increased the school systems spending per child, overcrowding still leaves the students lacking in personal attention. This fact, coupled with a high rate of both substance abuse and teenage pregnancies, is probably a major contributor to the large number of dropouts among high school students. It is difficult for most to envision a change in the future of this city. The percentage of elderly and minority residents has steadily risen over the past 15-20 years in Central Falls with no evidence of change. As of 1990, half of the city's population speaks another language at home and half of those residents don't speak English "very well" or at all. Also, the pattern in the city's history indicates that if and when a family attains a middle-income status they leave only to be replaced by another wave of poor. These are strong obstacles, which stand in the way of every city organization attempting to bring forth positive change. Amidst the negative statistics which describe the City of Central Falls, however, are hidden a few small glimmers of hope. For example, 1980's census reported a dismal 33.8% high school graduation level for residents while 1990's census reported that 46.9% of the population graduated. The percentage may still be low but the increase of 13.1 % is undeniably positive. Also, college graduates made up less than 3% of city residents in 1980 while in 1990 5.7% of residents held a bachelors degree or higher. Again, this is a low percentage but it has doubled in only ten years. Financially, the city is better off as well with the schools being state funded and with our library receiving large grants from outside sources. Finally, the city has seen a small reconstruction over the past few years with removal and/or renovations to dilapidated buildings and expansion of our own library-we have provided a parking lot to accommodate a larger patronage and will be opening a museum to inspire residents to take pride in the city. These changes, however small, show that the city has the ability to move in a positive direction and that our work with the disadvantaged can result in a better Central Falls.

This five year long-range plan has been created in the midst of a major reconstruction period for our small library. The increase in grant funding as well as state funding has lessened a long felt budgetary constraint and allowed us to be much more ambitious in our goals. This plan represents a realistic framework upon which we will base our future endeavors and against which we will measure our achievements.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Central Falls Free Public Library is to serve people of all ages regardless of race, color, creed, or financial means and to provide them with the resources to pursue their goals whether they be educational, recreational, cultural, informational, or personal. Further, the library must remain current and relevant in its reading materials, technologies, and programs so as to provide our patronage with the same advantages as those available to all people everywhere.

### **Major Goals To Be Achieved From July 1999-June 2004**

- GOAL 1:** Establish and maintain a technologically current computer lab with full time support and supervision.
- GOAL 2:** Establish and maintain Central Falls first museum and cultural center to inspire civic pride, encourage cultural awareness, and to pay homage to the city's fallen veterans.
- GOAL 3:** Maintain a current and relevant collection of library materials, which appeals to our diverse patronage.
- GOAL 4:** Continue to hold socially relevant programs for our patrons including library orientations for school-aged children.
- GOAL 5:** Replace and repair the library's equipment in order to perform day to day operations in an efficient and expedient manner.
- GOAL 6:** Renovate, restore, and repair the interior and exterior of both the library building and museum building and the land surrounding each.
- GOAL 7:** Enlarge and maintain our local Rhode Island, textile, and Civil War History collections.

**GOAL 1: Establish and maintain a technologically current computer lab with full time support and supervision.**

**Objective 1:** By July 1999, move the Literacy Volunteers of Americas' office to the museum building next door.

**Objective 2:** Equip the former L. V.A. office with ports connected to the hub server which will allow computers to be hooked up to our network.

**Objective 3:** Furnish the office with desks large enough to support a computer, a keyboard, and a monitor. Also, provide a desk and a work terminal for the supervisor's use.

**Objective 4:** Install and setup between four and six computers for public use. Each will have access to the World Wide Web, word processing programs, and spreadsheet programs. Future programs will be installed as they become needed.

**Objective 5:** Advertise the opening of the computer lab in order to inform the public and encourage new patronage. Our personal web site, The Pawtucket Times, and The Valley Breeze are a few of the places that may provide some free advertisement.

**Objective 6:** One night a week, an instructional program on the use and navigation of the World Wide Web will be given in the computer lab. This program will be given by the supervisor and will be provided to students as well as adults. Of course, the program will be dependent on how many people show interest.

**Objective 7:** Log the usage of the computers by having a sign-in sheet. This will help us to determine the helpfulness of this endeavor and the extent to which any expansion may be needed. Also, we will be able to determine the best hours of operation.

**Objective 8:** Each year investigate and analyze new software that may be relevant to the needs of our patronage and staff. Purchase of such software cannot be scheduled ahead of time as technology moves at an indeterminable rate.

**Objective 9:** Create and implement an operating procedure by which the computer lab will be run. This document will include but is not limited to:

Hours of operation

Time limitations on patron usage Acceptable use of the computers

Unacceptable viewing material on the World Wide Web Proper supervision methods

Expulsion of violators of lab policy

**Objective 10:** Continuously, throughout this five-year period, research new web pages that may aid our patrons in any way. These pages and/or sites will be advertised to our patrons through word of mouth, written signs displayed in the lab, or through the use of bookmarks on our web browser.

**GOAL 2: Establish and maintain Central Falls first museum and cultural center to inspire civic pride, encourage cultural awareness, and to pay homage to the city's fallen veterans.**

**Objective 1:** Continue the repairs and renovations to the interior of the museum that began over a year ago .

**Objective 2:** Plan, organize, and advertise a grand opening to be held in the Fall of 1999.

**Objective 3:** Create and implement an operating procedure by which the museum will be run. This document will include but is not limited to:

Hours of operation

Cost of admission

Preparation for guided tours

Acceptable and unacceptable behavior of museum patrons

Expulsion of violators of museum policy

Proper security

**Objective 4:** Continue the raising of funds for the Veterans' Memorial Monument, which will be displayed on the front lawn of the museum. The fund raising will continue until such a time as \$15,000 has been raised.

**Objective 5:** When the \$15,000 has been raised for the Veterans' Memorial, hire a company to build the monument based on our design.

**Objective 6:** Inquire into the possibility of hiring a custodial engineer to work, on a part time basis, in the museum.

**Objective 7:** Continuously change and organize the collection of the museum in order to inspire diverse and repeat visitors. This will be determined by the availability of new material.

**GOAL 3: Maintain a current and relevant collection of library materials, which appeal to our diverse patronage.**

**Objective 1:** Systematically weed the reference collection every summer and replace materials with more current and/or more relevant material for the fall.

**Objective 2:** Systematically weed the test material, including GED and other exam preparation material, every summer and replace with the more current study aids.

**Objective 3:** Continue to purchase a high majority of the books featured as “best-sellers” in *The New York Times Book Review* and *Publishers Weekly*. Also, purchase and make available those new books, which have been featured, on television shows such as “The Oprah Winfrey Show”.

**Objective 4:** Continue to provide a method by which patrons can request materials that they would like the library to purchase.

**Objective 5:** Continue to purchase popular large print books for our “Outreach Program” whereby we bring books to those patrons who are shut-in or unable for whatever reason to leave their homes.

**Objective 6:** Each year increase our Spanish collection by 10% and continue to buy current material that teaches English to those Spanish patrons that wish to learn.

**Objective 7:** Each year increase our audio book collection by 100/0. Audio book selections will be based on those considered most popular according to the best sellers lists and patron requests.

**Objective 8:** Each year for the next five years, increase our videocassette collection by 10%. Videocassette purchases will be based on those considered most popular according to the best sellers lists and patron requests. This objective is subject to change within the five-year period encompassed by this plan if the staff determines that the DVD player or any other technological advance has surpassed the VCR in popularity.

**Objective 9:** Each year for the next five years, increase our children’s videocassette collection by 10%. Popular children’s movies will be selected as usual, however, over the next five years we will purchase a larger percent of educational and informative videos for all age levels.

**Objective 10:** Continue to maintain our personal web site. This requires weekly updates of information throughout this five-year period.



**GOAL 4: Continue to hold socially relevant programs for our patrons including library orientations for school-aged children.**

**Objective 1:** Through cooperation with the school system, have more classes brought to the library for orientation. This should inform the students of the proper usage of the library's materials as well the value of using them.

**Objective 2:** Through cooperation with the school system, obtain the yearly summer reading lists prior to the end of each school year in order to insure that we have the material. Also, we will display the material in a conspicuous area to encourage the students not to procrastinate in their assignments.

**Objective 3:** Continue to aid and support our affiliate of the Literacy Volunteers Of America by supplying them with an office, phone service, proper reading material, technical computer support, and access to all library materials. Also, aid them in finding new volunteers by circulating flyers containing information on the valuable job that they are performing.

**Objective 4:** Each week for each of the next five years, continue to hold our popular story hour program.

**Objective 5:** Once the Lysander and Susan Flagg Museum is open and operating, hold several community programs throughout each year .These programs will be cultural, educational, artistic, or all of the above. It is difficult, however, to foresee what these programs will be as the museum is not yet open. The director along with the staff and possibly community personnel will determine and plan functions for the museum when operations are underway and the day-to-day procedures are running smoothly.

**Objective 6:** Continue to provide books to those patrons who are shut-in and unable to leave their houses for whatever the reason. This "Outreach Program" has been successful in the past and should continue to run smoothly each year as long as there remains a need for it.

**Objective 7:** Obtain, through donation or purchase, passes to the museums of Rhode Island and distribute these passes to those patrons who show interest.

**GOAL 5: Replace and repair the library's equipment in order to perform day-to-day operations in an efficient and expedient manner .**

**Objective 1:** Replace the dumb terminals with PCs. This is necessary because the technology, which will be used by CLAN in the near future, will make these dumb terminals obsolete.

**Objective 2:** Install new laser scanners that are compatible with the new PCs. These scanners greatly increase the speed of circulation operations and thus allow us to better serve our patrons.

**Objective 3:** Install one high quality laser printer in the computer lab and network it to all the workstations. This high resolution printer will replace the lower grade printers we are currently using and allow patrons to print much more detailed, sharp, and professional looking documents.

**Objective 4:** The new PCs, according to Clan policy, will need to be replaced again in the year 2002 and every three years thereafter in order to keep current with the Clan system and its technology .

**Objective 5:** Purchase and install two new receipt printers, which aid in our efforts to keep track of minor monetary exchanges, which occur often in day-to-day operations.

**Objective 6:** Install a climate control system in the basement of the library. This will consist of but is not limited to, an a/c control, a humidifier, a dehumidifier, and a more accurate heating control.

**Objective 7:** Purchase two new bookcases to hold the adult paperback collection in the front west reading room of the library. This will free up some much-needed space and allow us to open up the areas between the front columns as was originally intended by the architects of this historical building.

**Objective 8:** Prior to the opening of the computer lab, purchase and install a new hub server and router, which will accommodate the number of computers that are to be used in the lab. An independent electrician will have to be hired in order to properly rewire the library .

**GOAL 6: Renovate, restore, and repair the interior and exterior of both the library building and museum building and the land surrounding each.**

**Objective 1:** Repair the roof of the library building. The work will be put out to bid near the end of the summer of 1999 with the lowest bidder receiving the costly job of repairing the metal roof of the library.

**Objective 2:** Repair the drainage system on the library building to prevent further water damage from occurring.

**Objective 3:** Reside the museum building and paint those areas that are made of natural wood. In order to attract any visitors the museum must have a polished appearance.

**Objective 4:** Install track lighting in the museum as is common in any setting where exhibits are being shown.

**Objective 5:** Insulate the museum building in order to negate the threat caused by the lead paint, which is common in buildings of such age.

**Objective 6:** Re-carpet the children's room in the basement of the library building.

**Objective 7:** Extend the basements baseboard heat to include the new computer lab. Also, Install new and better lighting in the ceilings, repaint the lab walls, and carpet the lab floor. These enhancements to the lab will occur as the budget dictates over the next five years.

**GOAL 7: Enlarge and maintain our local Rhode Island, textile, and Civil War History collections.**

**Objective 1:** Each year for the next five years, increase our collection of local Rhode Island history, the textile industry, and Civil War history by 10% each. The increase may be limited, however, by the availability of such material.

**Objective 2:** Continue to research the names of local veterans who served in the Civil War and add them to our customized Access database. This database will be available, on our computers, to any interested patron. Also this database will be available on our personal web site, which must be continually updated each week throughout this five-year period.

**Objective 3:** Continue to research and display on our web site the list of those local men who died while in the service of their country .

**Objective 4:** Revamp our local history report and make it available to all patrons upon request. This document has proven useful in the past for both students working on projects and adults researching the history of Central Falls.

## **Evaluation**

This five year long-range plan will be reviewed by the Planning Committee each July. Each objective will be carefully reviewed in the following manner:

1. What progress has been made in achieving the objective?
2. Was the objective met by the specified date of completion? If not, why not?
3. What new objectives and/or goals have been or should be added to the library's overall plan?
4. Is the execution of these objectives resulting in the attainment of the library's overall goals?
5. Are those objectives that have not yet been executed still relevant and possible to perform? If not, should they be discarded or simply edited to conform to the current situation?

Finally, each July, after performing the evaluation as shown above, the planning committee will formulate the following years timetable. Previous long-range plans have had a completed five-year timetable included, which have proven to be useless after only a year or two. Too much of our planning is dependent on outside factors, such as budgetary constraints and available technology, for us to properly set exact dates for accomplishment of specific goals. Instead, the planning committee will use this plan each year to map out what we feel is possible for the following year. This way, we will know the exact state of the library and the community prior to deciding what we can realistically accomplish. The value of this plan lies in its use as a guideline and an annual reminder of what we hope to achieve in the next five years. By reviewing it each July and mapping out the steps we will take each year, we will make this document much more realistic and useful.

## **1999-2000 Time- Table For Implementation Of Objectives**

### **GOAL 1**

Objective 1 :

By the end of 1999, have the Literacy Volunteers of America completely set up in the second floor office of the museum building with a working phone and computer.

Objective 2:

By August 1999, complete the installation of the computer ports and hub server into the former L. V .A. office (heretofore to be known as the computer lab) .

Objective 3:

By September 1999, furnish the computer lab with enough desks to facilitate the current supply of computers.

Objective 9:

Prior to the official opening of the new computer lab, create the document, which will spell out the standard operating procedures of said lab .

Objective 4 and 5 :

By October 1999, Set up the available computers in the computer lab. Advertise the lab and officially open it for patron use.

### **GOAL 2**

Objective 1 :

Continue to repair and renovate the interior and exterior of the museum building throughout the summer of 1999, or until the work is completed.

Objective 2:

By November 1999, plan, organize, and advertise the grand opening of the Lysander and Susan Flagg Museum.

Objective 3 :

Prior to the opening of the museum, create the document to be used as the standard procedures manual for the museum.

### **GOAL 3**

Objective 1:

During the summer of 1999, continue to weed out the reference section of the library and replace older materials with newer and/or more relevant material.

Objective 6,7,8,9:

Before July 2000, determine the amount of materials required to increase our collections of Spanish books, audio books, videocassettes, and children's videocassettes by 10% (This will be accomplished by requesting reports from Dynix) and then purchase those amounts of materials.

### **GOAL 4**

Objective 1 and 2:

Before September 1999, contact the Central Falls School Department and solicit their aid in getting the students to a library orientation. Also, work out a plan by which we can have access to the summer reading list prior to the end of the school year .

Objective 5:

Shortly after the opening of the Lysander and Susan Flagg Museum, hold a meeting of staff to brainstorm possible indoor and outdoor community events for the new museum.

Objective 7:

Before September 1999, contact several Rhode Island museums directly and inquire about the possibility of obtaining passes, either through purchase or donation, for our patrons.

## **GOAL 5**

### Objective 7:

By August 1999, purchase and install two new bookcases into the front west wing and transfer the adult paperback collection into these cases.

### Objective 8:

Prior to the opening of the computer lab, purchase and install a new router and hub server in the lab. An independent electrician will be hired to do the rewiring.

### Objective 1,2 and 5:

By January 2000, replace our three dumb terminals with PCs and install laser scanners that are compatible with these computers. Also install two new receipt printers for these terminals.

### Objective 3:

By March 2000, install one high quality laser printer in the computer lab and network it to all operating computers within the lab.

## **GOAL 6**

### Objective 1:

In the summer of 1999, put the project of repairing the library's metal roof out to bid and choose the company that will eventually do the job. The plans for commencement and completion of this project will be determined after meeting with this company.

### Objective 3:

Throughout the summer of 1999, continue the project of residing the museum building and painting the natural wood areas of the building until the job is completed.



Objective 2:

By July 2000, repair the drainage system on the library building.

Objective 4,5,6,and 7:

These projects will commence as soon as possible. This, of course, depends on the space that is available, (it is difficult to facilitate several working crews at once) as well as the financial situation of the library and the availability of companies qualified to do the job.

### **GOAL 7**

Objective 4:

By September 1999, revamp our local history paper and make several copies available to patrons upon request.

Objective 2:

By January 2000, make our database of local Civil War veterans available on our personal web site.

Objective 1:

By July 2000, request reports from Dynix that will give us the number of books currently held in our Rhode Island History, textile, and Civil War History collections. After these figures are calculated, we will purchase materials in an amount that will raise the number of books in each collection by 10 %.